

REMARKS

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Matsuzaki (JP 03-132910 A). In response, Applicants amended claim 19 to clarify that the protective film of the magnetic head includes a first lateral recess and a second transverse recess generally perpendicular to the first lateral recess, and respectfully traverse.

The Examiner asserts that stepped portions 111, 112, 121, 122 shown in Figs. 2 and 5-6 of Matsuzaki correspond to the recess that extends the entire length of the rail from a thin-film element part number 2 toward a distal end of a slider. While, Matsuzaki shows the stepped portions 111, 112 or 121, 122 as lateral stepped portions, Matsuzaki fails to teach (or suggest) a second transverse recess in combination with a lateral recess.

In contrast, Applicants amended claim 19 to clarify that the protective film 36 has a first lateral recess and a second transverse recess generally perpendicular to the first lateral recess. As illustrated in FIG. 3A, the present invention includes a first lateral recess along the length of rail surfaces 33a and 33b, and a second transverse recess 43a. Accordingly, since Matsuzaki fails to disclose the recited structure of claim 19, namely the first and the second generally perpendicular recesses in a protective film of the magnetic head, withdrawal of the §102 rejection of claims 19 and its associated dependent claim 27 is respectfully requested.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuzaki. Since claim 22 depends upon claim 19, it necessarily includes all of the features

of its associated independent claim plus additional features. Thus, Applicants submit that the §103 rejection of claim 22 has also been overcome for the same reasons mentioned above to overcome the rejection of independent claim 19. Applicants respectfully request that the §103 rejection of claim 22 also be withdrawn.

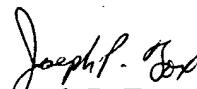
Withdrawn claims 28-29 are further amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the second recess. New claim 30 is added and defines the magnetic head as having a recess in the protective film that has a width “equal to” a width of the rail.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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